

Richard R. Troxell

Education

1983-1985 Temple University Philadelphia PA

1993-1997 St. Edward's University, Austin, TX Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology
Outstanding New College Graduate

1999 American Dispute Resolution Services Certified Mediator

2000 Lauterstein Conway School of Massage, Austin, Texas State Certified Massage Therapist

Awards

1987 United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Special Recognition

1988 La Salle University—Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Community Contributions, Pennsylvania
Senate Citizenship Award Philadelphia Bar Association Citizenship Award

1989 Penn Area Neighborhood Association Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Service

1991 Distinguished Service Award from Mayor Lee Cook, Austin, TX, Certificate of Recognition for
proposals developed to aid Austin's homeless population from Governor Ann Richards

1995– present Five Who Care Award– National Jefferson Community Service Award, Austin Area
Homeless Coalition Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Community Service J.C. Penny Golden
Rule Award Beverly "Ma" Curtis Award– National Coalition for the Homeless United Way Community
Collaboration Award Austin Chamber of Commerce Community Legacy Award American Civil Liberties
Union of TX Outstanding Civic Contributions Certificate City of Austin Human Rights Commission
Recognition and Award

Positions Held

1981- present Legal Services Corporation PA & TX– Paralegal/Director– Legal Aid for the
Homeless

* created program Legal Aid for the Homeless, presently Director

*assists clients in non criminal legal matter

*created and monitored the Emergency Shelter Grant between HOBO and Legal Aid

*designed and formatted the Homeless Continuum of Care for single adults (Project Fresh Start)

June 1978-February 1989 Community Legal Services, Inc Philadelphia, PA– Paralegal

*specialized in housing law

*negotiated with Mortgage companies

*organized community groups

1976- 1978 Consumer Education & Protection Association (CEPA) Phila, PA– District Director

Volunteer Experience

1989-present House the Homeless Inc Austin, TX- Founder and President

*Annual Homeless Memorial Service *Annual Thermal Underwear Drive

* Heart and Sole Program *Plastic Pocket Guide * Jobs Plus+ *Universal Living Wage
Campaign Founder and National Chairman

1997-98 Leadership Austin

2000 Citizens Police Academy

Publications

Winning proposal Permanent Housing for Homeless People in Philadelphia, published by
U.S. Department of HUD and The U.S. State Department in connection with the United
Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

Striking-A-Balance

Austin's Low Income Housing Guide

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Good Day,

I am Richard Iroxell, president and founder of House the Homeless, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created in 1989 here in Austin. It is the oldest grassroots, homeless advocacy, organization in Texas. It is comprised of all homeless and formerly homeless people and those wishing to end homelessness. Our goal is to end homelessness as it exists today through **education** and **advocacy**. HTH is an **all volunteer** organization with **no paid staff**.

We have created many programs that we have then passed on to other organizations.

For example, we wrote the Migrant Families Report that identified the phenomenon of thousands of families changing residence and schools within the AISD system in an effort to avoid eviction borne of economic problems. As a result, "Project Help" was created and funded under the 1988 federal McKinney Act and is now part of the AISD system. This program helps homeless children that need school books, supplies, and life saving vaccinations.

Similarly, House the Homeless created the Jobs Plus program that provides help to people experiencing homelessness to secure jobs and the transitional help needed to **leave** homelessness including assistance with the first and last months rent, and deposit money. This program is now called Hands Up to Housing and operates at the ARCH.

House the Homeless in 1989, wrote and presented the Austin Police Department with the program, Blue Gray Task Force. This is the idea of bringing purpose to the lives of retired law enforcement officers and involving them in resolving unresolved murder cases known as "cold cases."

Another program, Project Fresh Start, identifies the needs of single homeless adult males who are dually diagnosed with both mental health and substance abuse problems.

This proposal identifies the **needs** and what organization/group might **best serve those needs**. It is a seamless Continuum of Care proposal that establishes all of the steps needed to move people from an **objectly homeless state** to a fully housed, **stabilized** condition or to where they are **employed and self-sufficient**. The project received the Community Collaboration Legacy Award from the Capital Area United Way and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. It was the **only** homeless project ever funded by then governor George W. Bush with \$100,000 for the jobs component in a 20 person model project.

However, the realization that certain **external** factors negatively impact on the potential success of Project Fresh Start, led HTH to the creation of the Universal Living Wage.

Last year, this community collectively brought in \$4,000,000 through the Austin Area Homeless Task Force to address the problems of homelessness but what we realized is that, all of this money, and all our efforts won't sustain people in housing when those found to be disabled receive only \$623.00 per month. Working a 40-hour week job, at the current federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour, or even a wage of \$6 or \$7 per hour, is not enough to **keep** people in housing in Austin.

To that end, HTH devised a single national formula that ensures that anyone working 40 hours in a week will be able to afford basic food, clothing, shelter, and have access to health care, wherever that work is done throughout the United States.

Focusing on the support of businesses, unions, non-profits and faith-based organizations, we now tout the support of 1,556 such entities representing over 1,000,000 registered voters. We are proud to say that the City of Austin was the first municipality to endorse the Universal Living Wage.

Promoting democratic participation, House the Homeless has registered over 2,000 homeless people to vote in a non-partisan fashion.

HTH helped to create the Austin Homeless Advocate Newspaper. This is Austin's homeless newspaper written and sold by our homeless citizens about their experiences while living on the streets of Austin.

HTH also has also adopted two homeless orphaned girls in the county of Uganda, Bobirye and Rebecca. This helps the guys think beyond their own suffering.

You can see some of the other efforts of House the Homeless on our two websites:

www.HousetheHomeless.org and
www.UniversalLivingWage.org

Some Awards Received by HTH includes:

- COA Distinguished Service Award – Mayor Lee Cook
- Certificate of Recognition- Governor Ann Richards
- Certificate of Appreciation – Mayor Bruce Todd
- COA Human Rights Commission
- COA Certificate of Appreciation – Mayor Gus Garcia

We are now in the process of publishing our book *Looking Up at the Bottom Line* that tells about some of our other efforts including fighting for six years the “No Camping” ordinance that only served to criminalize the condition of being homeless, waste both tax dollars and police resources while interfering with the dramatically more important task of ending homelessness, itself.

Finally, it was in 1989 that we created Legal Aid for the Homeless where I act as the director and help the disabled homeless apply for disability benefits. Again, \$623.00

per month is far less than the minimum wage. For that reason, House the Homeless/Legal Aid for the Homeless are partnering with Alan Graham and Mobile Loaves and Fishes in an effort to **make the cost of the housing relate to the dollars available** through the Habitat on Wheels Project. We do this with one additional caveat, which is to recognize that these folks are citizens of our community. With all of their flaws and warts, they are us. They are our brothers and sisters, and we must treat them with dignity and fairness, with compassion, and with love.

As I leave the podium, I wish to personally thank Mayor Will Wynn. Following our 14th Homeless memorial on November 18th, having read the names of 93 more people who died on our streets this past year, we launched our 7th Annual Thermal Underwear Drive in an effort to prevent further loss of life. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for sending your check. You may well save the life of one or more of our people this winter. On Christmas Day, we provided over **750 people** with life saving hats, gloves, socks, thermals, and rain ponchos in an effort to minimize further deaths on our streets.